

Bradenton, Florida -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL 13) announced today that he will host an educational workshop next week to increase awareness of federal resources available to help prevent gang activity. The Congressman has invited a senior policy analyst for the U.S. Department of Education, Blanca Rodriguez, to give a presentation about the basics of researching, applying for, and receiving grant funding, with a special emphasis on Safe and Drug Free Schools and gang prevention.

“Gang violence is an important public safety issue in Manatee County that must be addressed,” said Buchanan. “Gang activity has been directly linked to deadly shootings, resulting at times in the injuries and death of innocent bystanders --law-abiding citizens and children. Federal funding is available for local gang prevention and intervention programs. This workshop will help organizations identify, apply for, and receive federal grants.”

Buchanan has introduced the “Gang Reduction, Investment, and Prevention (GRIP) Act” to provide law enforcement with additional tools to crack down on gang violence and authorize significant resources for community-based gang prevention and intervention programs focused on at-risk and gang-involved youth. The bill is based on input Buchanan received during a series of roundtable discussions he hosted last year to discuss opportunities for federal, state, and local officials to work together with community-based groups to address this important issue.

State, county, and local government agencies and area non-profits are encouraged to attend the informational event at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, January 11, 2008. The workshop will be held at the Orange Ridge Bullock Elementary School, 400 30th Ave W, Bradenton, FL 34205. Attendees must sign in at front desk with a picture ID.